

Dr. Johnson is also survived by four sisters, Barbara Jones, Trumilla Jones, Ernestine Wright, and Betty Coley; three brothers, Rudolph Sharpe, Eugene Sharpe, and a very good friend of mine, David Sharpe of Phoenix, Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this great life. We extend condolences to her husband, Bishop Joseph Johnson, their sons, and all of their family and friends.

DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the House overwhelmingly defeated by a vote of 318-97 a blank check on spending. We stopped the unconditional raising of the debt ceiling. The fact remains, we are in a debt crisis because Washington spends too much, not because it taxes too little.

America is drowning in debt, and we need to significantly reduce spending and make long-term reforms that encourage private sector job creation and move toward a balanced budget. Raising the debt limit without restoring financial accountability was unacceptable, and that's why I voted against this irresponsible debt limit increase.

I can't comprehend why this administration continues to push the same dangerous failed strategy that got us into this economic mess. The failure to increase the debt limit on the floor Tuesday would be enough evidence for the White House and Washington Democrats to conclude that Americans want Washington to stop signing a blank check, spending money we don't have and sending the bill to our children and our grandchildren—grandchildren that I personally have an opportunity every time I open my BlackBerry to see their faces and be reminded that it's for them that I speak and this House spoke on Tuesday evening.

Yet more than 100 House Democrats signed on to a letter publicly advocating for a debt limit increase without spending cuts and reforms. And unfortunately after meeting with the President yesterday, I'm not sure he's heard the people on this issue either.

According to the latest evidence, only 11 percent of Americans support a blank check raising of the debt limit and more spending. This vote demonstrates that President Obama and the House Democrats are far out of step with the rest of America and should join House Republicans in working to cut spending. The American people have said "no" to the Democrats and they're not going to take it anymore, not another blank check of more spending and more debt for the Obama administration.

It's the time now to think of the next generation and not the next election and take time to rip up a blank check of defeat for our country.

PENNY-WISE AND POUND-FOOLISH ON AMERICAN SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, we've learned a lot over the last several days about the Republican commitment to both national security and fiscal responsibility. Last week, after the party of limited government spending passed the \$690 billion defense authorization bill loaded with Pentagon pork, they jammed through a 4-year extension of key provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. With a last-minute rushed vote with virtually no debate, the party of small government authorized more wiretapping and more poking through Americans' personal records.

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Now today, our ongoing debate over fiscal year 2012 Homeland Security appropriations shows us that the majority's penny-wise, pound-foolish approach is in all of its glory. This bill breaks faith with first responders, underfunding key firefighter assistance grants and State Homeland Security grants that primarily train and equip first responders. Important programs will be rolled into a block grant so that localities will be competing for dwindling Federal Homeland Security grants, this and more undermining our communities' ability to deal with all kinds of hazards, including potential nuclear, chemical, and biological attacks.

The bill cuts Homeland Security research and development programs by 40 percent, Mr. Speaker. So while terrorist organizations are busily mastering technologies, we will be eliminating very important research projects in biological and explosives detection and advanced cybersecurity. Shame on us.

Homeland Security already took a hit in fiscal year 2011. The majority, which claims to care about nothing more than the safety and security of the American people, wants to cut more than a billion dollars from last year's funding levels, and provides \$2 billion less than what the President has proposed.

Meantime, while we are nickel and diming our first responders, we are throwing \$10 billion every month, \$10 billion every month at a war in Afghanistan that is killing Americans, while doing very little, if anything, to advance our national security. Where are the budget cutters when it comes to appropriating that money? Where are all the hard questions and the tough scrutiny when it comes to funding a decade-long military occupation of Afghanistan that has failed in every conceivable way? Ten billion dollars a month on Afghanistan. For the price of about 6 days of fighting the war in Afghanistan, we could make up the difference between the President's Homeland Security request and the allocation in this bill. Six days.

The majority clearly has one set of standards for important domestic programs and quite another for military adventures abroad. If you want to wage a war, no questions asked. But if you want to support first responders, or educate small children, or preserve Medicare, you better duck, because the budget axe is aimed at the people's priorities.

I remind my friends in the majority that terrorists would strike us here on our shores, in our homeland, in our capital. An enormous military footprint that is stomping down in a sovereign country thousands of miles away, a country where Osama bin Laden wasn't hiding and al Qaeda is barely active, is not where we need to be putting our efforts.

Let's do the smart thing. Let's fully fund Homeland Security and let's save money and lives by bringing our troops home.

AMERICA'S CREDIT RATING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week the United States House sent a clear message to the White House that it's time to address our Nation's growing debt crisis and get serious with real budgetary reforms so that America can meet its budget and credit obligations at home and around the world. There's good reason why the dollar is still the world's gold standard when it comes to credit ratings and that the U.S. is seen as a wise investment around the world.

A first-rate credit rating, which the United States currently has, means there is nothing for lenders to worry about. It lets investors know how likely a borrower can pay back a loan, and that they will receive a good return on their investment. That's why I can't emphasize enough the importance of our Nation's credit rating. A downgraded credit rating would erode confidence in our economy and reduce certainty for businesses, investors at home, and abroad. We must work to ensure that this never happens by reforming spending and fixing our debt problem. Make it so that there is not one doubt when it comes to the creditworthiness of the United States.

In April, Standard & Poor's lowered the outlook on the United States' credit to negative. S&P's rationale: the U.S. has a large debt and deficit compared with other highly rated nations, and unlike with those other nations, "the path to addressing the debt and the deficit is not clear to us."

To be clear, this warning from the S&P was not over the debt limit debate, but because Washington has no plan to tackle its massive debt. Since 1975, there have been at least nine examples when clean debt limit bills have failed to pass in either the House or the Senate. And remember, in 2006 then-